

STENOPORA.

scabra (Rafin. sp.). *Favosites* id., Kon. Anim. Foss. Belg.
C. Sl. Hook; Clonea; Currans.

STROMBODES (*Lithostrotion*, Lonsd.).

emarciatum (Lonsd. sp.), Geol. Russ. and Ural. C. L. Derbyshire.

VINCULARIA.

<i>dichotoma</i> (M'Coy), Syn. Carb. Foss.	{	L. L. Howth; Kildare.
<i>megastoma</i> (M'Coy), Syn. Carb. Foss.		U. L. Black Lion, Enniskillen.
<i>raricostata</i> (M'Coy), Syn. Carb. Foss.		U. L. Killymeal.
		U. L. Killymeal, Dungannon.

XIV.—*Supplementary Notices regarding the Dodo and its Kindred.*

Nos. 1, 2, 3. By H. E. STRICKLAND, M.A., F.G.S.

ONE of the main objects which Dr. Melville and myself had in view, in publishing our recent work on the Dodo and its Kindred, was to draw the attention of others to this interesting historico-physical investigation, and thus to elicit from all quarters such additional items of information as had escaped our own research. Many a curious scrap of Dodo-knowledge is doubtless still buried in the holes and corners of libraries, museums, and picture-galleries, and many a precious bone-fragment still moulders in the caverns and alluvions of the Mascarene Islands. Already, in the short interval since our publication saw the light, have several important links been added to the chain of evidence there displayed,—partly through the kind diligence of our friends, and partly by our own more recent researches. These supplementary facts I propose to communicate from time to time to the ‘Annals of Natural History.’

1. *Historical evidence of the Dodo.*—I grieve to be obliged to record that Oxford, the cradle of so much learning, now stands convicted of having been the grave, not of *one* Dodo (as was hitherto supposed), but of two. A small dingy MS. volume has lately been purchased by the fellows of Queen’s College, Oxford (I dare not say at what price), from Mr. Rodd the bookseller. This precious but unattractive little book is the original autograph diary of Thomas Crossfield, once fellow of Queen’s, and extends over fourteen years, from 1626 to 1640. Amidst a variety of matters, some of historical interest, and others “of no importance to any but the owner,” we find the following curious passage, which was first detected, and kindly communicated to me, by the Rev. Dr. Bliss.

Page 68. “1634. Spectacula Oxonii in hoc anno.

1. The Palsgraves Family.
2. His mat^{ties} Hokus Pokus.
3. Dancing vpon the rope.
4. Hierusalem in its glory, destruction.

The story deuided into 5 or 6 parts, invented by Mr. Gosling, sometimes schollar to Mr. Camden, enginer, who BESTOWED THE DODAR (A BLACKE INDIAN BIRD) VPON Y^e ANATOMY SCHOOLE. His wife dying left him some meanes in a chest, w^{ch} a maide seruant cunningly getting y^e key of her master, conveyed away, and soe he now glad to get his liuinge by vseing his wits for such inventions.”

How Mr. Gosling obtained his “Dodar,” or what subsequently became of it, we have not a particle of evidence. The contents, and even the locality, of “y^e Anatomy schoole” of 1634 are alike unknown, the existing Anatomy school having been founded about 1750, independently of any previous establishment. One thing is certain, that this “Dodar” was not the same individual as the one which subsequently formed one of the treasures of the Ashmolean Museum, which was “ordered to be removed” in 1755, and whose head and foot are fortunately still in existence. For we have the clearest evidence that the latter specimen was in Tradescant’s private collection at Lambeth in 1656, and was not transferred to Oxford till 1683 (see ‘The Dodo and its Kindred,’ pp. 23, 32). Two Dodos have therefore existed, at successive periods, in the venerable repositories of Oxford University, where the naturalist from the remotest parts of Europe now makes the mouldering relics of one an object of pilgrimage.

I may here mention, that the preservation of these relics is due not so much to Fortune as to old Ashmole himself. In his original regulations for the management of his museum, it is enacted that when any of the specimens were found to be in bad condition, they should not be wholly destroyed, but the hard parts, such as the heads and feet, should be put away in a closet ; and to this judicious proviso of the old astrologer we are probably indebted for the most important evidences now existing on the structure of the Dodo.

2. *Affinities of the Dodo.*—I have received from that excellent osteologist, Mr. Thomas Allis of York, the following interesting communication, relating to a point in the anatomy of the Dodo which Dr. Melville and I had overlooked, but which wholly confirms our conclusions.

“On looking at plate ix* I immediately perceived strikingly confirmatory evidence of your views as to the Columbidine affinities of the Dodo, unnoticed either by thyself or by thy talented coadjutor, in his elaborate anatomical description of the head of that bird. This evidence consists in the number of the sclerotic plates. At the Zoological Section of the British Association at Liverpool I exhibited dissections of the sclerotic ring of about seventy birds ; among the seventy there were three species of

Columbidæ; each of these three had *eleven* plates in the sclerotic ring; being the precise number figured in the *Dodo*. No other bird had a similar number, and none so small a number, with the single exception of the Australian *Podargus*, in which bird the sclerotic ring is composed of one single bone, without the smallest trace of a division into separate plates. No abstract of my paper on the subject was published in the proceedings of that meeting, and its contents were never made public.

“I exhibited the rings of eight species of *Raptores*; the smallest number of sclerotic bones in this order was *fourteen*; and seven species of *Gallinidæ*, *thirteen* being the smallest number of plates.

“I thought this confirmatory evidence of the correctness of your views could not be otherwise than acceptable to thee; if thou considerest it of sufficient importance to deserve to be made known through one of our scientific periodicals, be so good as to get it inserted.

“Thy sincere friend,

“THOMAS ALLIS.”

Let me here, in passing, express an earnest hope that some means may be found of giving to the public the benefit of the valuable and original researches of Mr. Allis, which have hitherto been retained in MS. by that “great difficulty” of natural-history-authors, the expense of illustrative engravings.

3. *Historical evidences of the Solitaire*.—In a recent exploration of the precious collection of foreign periodicals in the Bodleian library, I discovered a work of which I had long been in quest, the ‘*Mémoires de la Société Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres de Nancy*,’ 4 vols. 12^o, Nancy, 1754–1759. The President of the Society, M. d’Heguerty, had been governor of Bourbon about 1734, and in a discourse which he delivered March 26, 1751, he entertained the Nancy *savans* with an account of the Mascarene Islands. Speaking of Bourbon, he mentions pintados, partridges, and other birds, but says nothing of the brevipennate birds of that island, though we have proof that they still existed in the time of La Bourdonnaye, d’Heguerty’s successor (see ‘*Dodo and its Kindred*,’ p. 60). He atones however for this omission by the following interesting notice of the Solitaire of Rodriguez, which is the more valuable as our previous historical evidence of that bird was almost wholly confined to the single testimony of Leguat. We now find that this bird survived from the time of Leguat’s visit, 1693, down to about 1735, and that, like the *Dodo*, it was capable of being kept alive in confinement.

At vol. i. p. 79, M. d’Heguerty says, speaking of Rodriguez :

“On y trouve aussi des oiseaux de différentes espèces, que l'on prend souvent à la course, et entre autres des Solitaires, qui n'ont presque point de plumes aux ailes; cet oiseau, plus gros qu'un Cygne, a la physionomie triste; apprivoisé on le voit toujours marcher à la même ligne, tant qu'il a d'espace, et retrograder de même sans s'en écarter. Lorsqu'on en fait l'ouverture, on y trouve ordinairement des Béoards, dont on fait cas, et qui sont utiles dans la médecine.”

XV.—*Reply to Sir Philip Egerton's Letter on the Tail of Diplopterus.* By FREDERICK M'COY, M.G.S. & N.H.S.D. &c.

To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.

GENTLEMEN,

Cambridge, Jan. 13th, 1849.

SIR PHILIP EGERTON has written a letter in your last Number, from which it would appear that I had acted unfairly towards Prof. Agassiz in my description of the diphyccercal type of tail in the November Number of your Journal, by remarking that Agassiz called the tail of *Diplopterus* 'heterocercal,' and leaving it to be inferred that the ordinary heterocercal form was intended. Sir P. Egerton does not deny the accuracy of my description and figure of the tail of this genus and its difference from the true heterocercal type; and though no one comparing them with Agassiz's work will see any resemblance, yet Sir Philip Egerton endeavours to show that Agassiz gave the same characters that I do, by suppressing in his letter all allusions to those passages in Agassiz's writings which state without reserve that the genus was heterocercal, and by quoting a certain passage (giving a very imperfect notion of the tail however) in which the existence of rays above the spine is mentioned. I will not ask why Sir Philip Egerton only gave you the quotation from Agassiz's work as far as he did? or why he did not quote it entire? But I supply the missing line of the quotation: “La caudale est tronquée presque verticalement, *et la colonne vertébrale finit à son angle supérieure;*” and I may add to this (what Sir P. Egerton also omits to mention), that in the restored figure of the genus (tab. E), combining his latest information in the same work, Agassiz figures *Diplopterus* with a heterocercal tail *perfectly identical with that of Osteolepis figured on the same plate*, which is one of the most perfectly heterocercal fishes we know. This figure too is in accordance with the above omitted portion of the quotation, and with the prevailing theory that none but heterocercal-tailed fishes lived at those ancient periods; it shows that the quotation given by Sir P. Egerton did not imply a knowledge